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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 2463  
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RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 6449  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0997  
RUEHVC/AMCONSUL VANCOUVER 0007  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 0469  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3679  
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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8481  
RUEHHT/AMCONSUL HAMILTON 0001  
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RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0377  
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0493  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4829  
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA 0253  
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT 0001  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 1259  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0990  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 0321  
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 5757  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0708

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 12 COLOMBO 000359

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP; DEPT ALSO PASS TO KCC; ADRESSEE POSTS FOR FRAUD  
PREVENTION MANAGERS; BANGKOK FOR RCO WILL LAIDLAW; KUWAIT FOR  
WILLIAM DOWERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - SRI LANKA

REF: COLOMBO 597

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Country Conditions  
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¶1. Political insecurity, economic and population pressures, and the lure of earning hard currency put pressure on Sri Lankans of all ages and classes of society to migrate legally and illegally to the United States. The violent civil conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) over more than two decades has created significant instability. Severe lags in socioeconomic development persist, particularly in the north and east of the country. Throughout the country, economic conditions are relatively poor, with high inflation and weak government spending on social services. Large numbers of Sri Lankans traditionally migrate for employment to the Middle East, Europe, East Asia, and North America, through both legal and illegal means. Early indications are that the global economic slowdown will strongly impact Sri Lankans working both domestically and abroad.

¶2. The consular section sees medium to high levels of fraud from all three major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka: Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim. (Many Muslims speak the Tamil language but do not identify with ethnic Tamils and are considered a separate ethnic group in Sri Lanka.) Despite the country's relatively small population and lack of direct flights to the U.S., Sri Lankans represent the fourth most frequently offloaded nationality on U.S.-bound flights, according to 2008 U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) statistics.

13. The largest Sri Lankan diaspora community is located in Toronto, Canada, where over 250,000 people of Sri Lankan origin (primarily ethnic Tamils) live. Severe restrictions imposed by the Canadian government on Sri Lankan visitor travel results in many mala fide travelers applying at Embassy Colombo hoping to reach Canada over the land border. Within the U.S., preferred destinations for both legal and illegal immigrants are New York and California. Human smugglers charge as much as \$40,000 a person for passage from Sri Lanka to North America.

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NIV Fraud - General Trends  
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14. Sri Lankan mala fide travelers with an ultimate destination in North America typically have family or friends waiting with a job and housing. There are a significant number of human smugglers and visa fraud facilitators operating in Sri Lanka, charging as much as \$10,000 for false documentation to submit with a U.S. visa application, and up to \$25,000 for a "full service" of documents plus other facilitation, such as by posing as family members or business associates of the buyer. Post sees false family relationships; fictitious marriages and divorces; false financial, employment and academic documentation; ringers posing as members of sports and entertainment groups; fraudulent crew applicants; false religious workers; and even visa fraud rings involving high-level government officials.

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15. Post sees significant numbers of seemingly non-qualified host government officials and their domestic employees applying for A or G visas. We continue to see problems with the payment of appropriate wages to A3/G5 applicants working for Sri Lankan and Middle Eastern diplomats in the United States. Interviews with returning applicants indicate that domestics working for Sri Lankan diplomats are rarely paid more than \$100 per month while in the United States. The Sri Lankan government has tried a number of tactics, ranging from claiming these domestics are actually government employees (applying for A2 status) to claiming that they are paid in cash, to avoid paying U.S. minimum or prevailing wages. Another trend has been for Sri Lankans illegally in the United States (mostly B2 visa overstay) to adjust to A2 status by obtaining clerical jobs at foreign embassies in Washington, D.C.; many of these adjustment of status applications are approved despite long periods of illegal presence, sometimes more than a decade. There are indications that these embassy jobs sometimes do not exist, and Post suspects active facilitation of this type on the part of certain foreign embassies, particularly African and other Asian missions, as well as the Sri Lankan Embassy in Washington, D.C.

16. Sri Lankans use a variety of techniques, from naive and obvious to complex and convincing, to fraudulently obtain visas. Small-time document vendors provide fake vital records and business documents that are relatively easy to spot, while sophisticated human smugglers provide more convincing identity and financial documents that are difficult to detect. We have seen several cases where genuine Sri Lankan entry stamps were purchased at the airport, usually back-dated to hide overstay in the United States. Post has seen several instances in which government ministers and Members of Parliament or their Secretaries have sponsored mala fide applicants for training or other seemingly legitimate purposes of travel - including official delegations - after which members of the party have remained as illegal immigrants. As a result, Embassy Colombo very carefully interviews all government-related traveling parties to the U.S. Post has documentary evidence of a Second Secretary attached to the Sri Lankan mission in the Washington, D.C. who provided coaching services for her cousin's nonimmigrant visa application to help her join her illegal alien husband in the United States.

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NIV Fraud - Student Visas  
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¶7. Post has seen a new trend of mala fide travelers increasingly targeting the F and J visa categories. Over the past six months, the refusal rate for F1 student visas has surged to over 49%, as compared to 31% for the same period a year ago and 24% in 2007. Although the total number of F1 student visa applications rose by 46% from 2007 to 2008, the number of F1 applications approved rose by only 11%, indicating that the majority of new interest in student visas is coming from unqualified applicants. Post's assessment is that most of these students have mala fide immigrant intent, and we are currently conducting a validation study of student visas which is expected to result in a standalone cable later this year.

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¶8. Both bona fide and mala fide student visa applicants often pay large sums of money to "agents" or "educational consultants" who steer them to particular schools and provide interview coaching. These agents often have exclusive contracts with schools in the U.S. which pay them based on the number of students recruited, with no penalty for those who are no-shows, withdraw, or otherwise violate their student status. Post has also seen examples of Sri Lankan students already in the U.S. attempting to facilitate other prospective students after gaining student employment jobs in college admissions offices.

¶9. Community colleges and language schools seem to be preferred targets of unqualified and mala fide Sri Lankan applicants. The results of an initial validation study showed the rate of SEVIS non-compliance to be distressingly high for students issued visas for two-year associate degree and standalone language programs. Perhaps in response to Post's increased scrutiny of community college applicants, an increasing number of students are applying to four-year colleges then immediately transferring upon arrival to language schools or community colleges where the number of classroom hours is lower and less rigorously enforced; this enables students to remain nominally enrolled while also working illegally on a full time basis. In just one example, one university in Texas reported to the Embassy that a group of 14 Sri Lankan students showed up in September 2008 demanding to be issued with social security numbers upon enrollment; when the school refused, the students transferred en masse to language schools or other community colleges in the New York area. Post has also seen numerous cases in which students were clearly not enrolled full-time (based on their transcripts), but were nonetheless reported by schools as being SEVIS-compliant. Such instances, which typically involve community colleges or language schools, and occasionally very small universities, enable Sri Lankan students to work illegally and still appear to comply with their student status; these offending institutions are well-known to our mala fide applicant pool.

¶10. Otherwise-qualified Sri Lankan students also appear to target schools with generous work-study options. Post recently learned that one reputable midwestern university long favored by Sri Lankan applicants offers students the opportunity to earn academic credits while working 40 hours a week over multiple semesters anywhere in the U.S., with no requirement that they attend any classes and very limited contact with academic faculty. The parent of a graduating student brought us a newspaper article from her U.S. university in which her daughter advised prospective international students to find "anyone" willing to pose as their sponsoring family member for the visa application, with the assurances that the student would be able to earn enough money while studying in the U.S. to fully cover the \$20,000+ per year educational costs. Post is baffled that such liberal work-study arrangements are allowed by SEVP.

¶11. Other Western missions in Colombo have shared similar concerns regarding student visa applications to their countries from Sri Lankan nationals. In September 2008, Australia upgraded Sri Lanka to its strictest category for prospective students, highlighting Sri Lanka as one of the worst violators of its student visa program worldwide. In order to qualify under the tough new conditions, prospective Sri Lankan undergraduate students must now show that

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they have had three full years of tuition and living expenses on-hand in an earmarked savings account for at least six months before they can qualify for a student visa. Anecdotal reports from local Fulbright Commission staff and others suggest that interest in U.S. student visas from both well- and poorly-qualified students is increasing as a result of these strict new Australian requirements, which the local media have described as "humiliating."

¶12. Post has also seen mala fide applicants increasingly targeting the J1 visa category, often with the involvement of local agents. In one case, an Israeli national B1/B2 visa holder with a business card listing his U.S. residential address came to the Embassy to complain after Post refused a large group of prospective Sri Lankan J1 hospitality industry workers he was attempting to facilitate in connivance with a local "agent." Most of these J1 applicants, who earned an average of \$50/month in hotels and restaurants in Sri Lanka, had borrowed thousands of dollars to pay for flights and the \$1000 agent fee, in return for the promise of menial hospitality industry work in the U.S.

¶13. Of particular concern across all sections of the Embassy is the fact that a number of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange visitors have failed to return to Sri Lanka over the past few years. These travelers entered the U.S. as part of the International Visitor Program (IVP) or similar USG-funded exchange programs, and made successful asylum claims. Post learns of these cases only when the asylum claimant's family members later apply for Visas 92 FTJ status. In order to reach out to ethnic minority Sri Lankans and those from less-developed parts of the country, Post attempts to allocate many of its visitor slots to individuals from these categories. However, general NIV trends in Sri Lanka show that ethnic minorities and those from conflict-affected areas also represent the greatest overstay and asylum claim risk. Efforts are being made to address these competing concerns; beginning with this year's IVP cycle, Post will work more closely with the nominating committee to take into account factors that make nominees not only good candidates for an IVP, but also likely to qualify for visas under INA 214b in their consular interview.

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IV Fraud - General Trends  
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¶14. Colombo's IV fraud mostly involves false marriages and family relationships. While marriages based on love affairs are increasing, arranged marriages are still the norm in Sri Lanka, especially in more rural areas. Even with field visits, verifying the validity of relationships is often difficult. Post is particularly cautious with K fiance visas. On many occasions post has found that a relationship is not genuine, especially when the age gap between the spouses is significant. In one case, Post found that an American citizen had filed a K1 petition to marry the younger sister of his current wife, whom he had not divorced. In another, Post recently detected a twice-divorced U.S. citizen of Sri Lankan origin petitioning for her own brother as her newly married husband with a fraudulently obtained local marriage certificate. A surprise neighborhood check on a Sri Lankan man who claimed to have divorced his wife a few years before to marry an American woman recently

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revealed that he still lives with his previous wife and four children, including the eldest, who has also been petitioned by the American. Post has also encountered several cases in which the wives and/or children of Sri Lankans living illegally in the U.S. are petitioned under K1, K3 or IR1 categories by American citizens they have either never seen, met at internet chat-rooms, or married after surprisingly short visits to Sri Lanka. Although Post returns such petitions to USCIS for revocation, the lack of consequences for American citizens filing fraudulent immigration petitions means this trend will likely continue unabated.

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Diversity Visa Fraud  
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¶15. Sri Lanka now ranks as the fourth largest recipient of Diversity Visas (DVs) in Asia, with 792 provisional winners notified for 2009, a rapid increase from 383 in 2008. As Sri Lankans have discovered the DV, they are also learning the rules and increasingly applying well-honed NIV fraud techniques on behalf of DV winners, often through certificates with falsified education examination results. To counter this trend, Post obtains examination results directly from the Sri Lankan Department of Examinations, and we require this official certificate for any DV applicant applying under their academic credentials. This approach has resulted in detecting two such fraud cases in DV 2008 program, including attempted falsification of the 'One-Day Collection Cards' - a tool innovated by the Embassy Colombo and the Sri Lanka Examination Department to deter fraud. In late February 2009, post saw its first fraud in DV 2009 program with a fraudulent examination results sheet from a school. A significant number of Sri Lankan DV winners are resident outside of the country, often as guest workers in the Middle East or Europe. Colombo encourages other posts to contact us to assist with verification of all documents related to Sri Lankan DV winners. Two Sri Lankan DV winners working in the Middle East were refused visas last year after Post determined that their examination results had been forged; Post strongly suspects that additional Sri Lankan DV winners have been able to take advantage of the fact that U.S. Embassies elsewhere are unfamiliar with standard Sri Lankan educational certificates.

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ACS and Passport Fraud  
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¶16. Although Post does not see much fraud in passport and citizenship applications, Canadian and British Airport Liaison Officers, who assist Sri Lankan authorities in identifying mala-fide travelers at the airport, occasionally ask for assistance in verifying suspect U.S. passport and/or U.S. identity documents. Mala fide Sri Lankan, Indian and Chinese travelers are often intercepted during screening at the airport and are either in possession of photo substituted U.S. passports or are imposters. Several such offenders, mostly of Chinese origin, were detained in remand prison during 2008 and have since been deported to their countries of origin. A dual American and Canadian citizen of Sri Lanka minority origin was detained in November 2008 after Colombo airport authorities determined that his U.S. passport had been tampered

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with. Diplomatic Security subsequently opened an investigation, which is ongoing, after a suspicious travel pattern and his employment information suggested that the individual may be involved with human smuggling. This individual has since disappeared, abandoning his application for a new U.S. passport.

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Adoption Fraud  
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¶17. The Immigrant Visa Unit issued 2 adoption visas during the fiscal year 2008, the same number issued in 2007. The Sri Lankan government does not favor foreign adoptions. Sri Lanka is a signatory to the Hague Convention; adoptions are governed by the Department of Child Care and Probation Service. Foreign prospective adoptive parents are not allowed to locate children for adoption themselves, and adoption by single persons is not permitted. To date Post has not uncovered any fraud in our adoption processing.

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Use of DNA Testing  
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¶18. In cases in which Post cannot sufficiently establish a bona fide relationship due to a lack of documentary evidence (mostly IV and Asylum cases), applicants are given the option of taking a DNA test. The process takes 2 - 3 weeks and costs around \$1000. Post has not encountered any negative DNA results so far, but on occasion applicants will refuse DNA testing and abandon applications, indicating that testing acts as a deterrent in applications involving false relationships.



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Asylum and Other DHS Benefit Fraud  
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¶19. Post would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with DHS in looking at ways to make the processing and assessment of asylum claims more robust. There is a disturbingly high level of fraud seen in Sri Lankan Visas 92 cases. In most asylum Follow To Join (FTJ) cases, establishing relationships to the petitioner is very difficult. Asylum FTJ beneficiaries are typically coached to provide as little information as possible, sometimes making it difficult to determine whether the beneficiary even knows the petitioner, much less is their spouse or child. Post attempts to verify all birth and marriage documents, but occasionally applicants have no identity documents available. In addition to the usual problems associated with arranged marriages, we often see applicants who present fraudulent identity documents but have positive DNA tests results, leaving us to deal with a genuine biological relationship but no idea what anyone's true identity is.

¶20. Of greatest concern is that the overwhelming majority of successful asylum claims made by Sri Lankan petitioners appear to be based on bogus stories of persecution. This is particularly worrisome given that, according to official statistics from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of asylum applications made by Sri Lankans worldwide rose 24 percent in

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2008, making it the fifth most rapidly increasing source of new asylum claims.

¶21. Although Post believes that there is persecution in Sri Lanka which is significant enough for favorable asylum findings, in our experience the vast majority of individuals who are experiencing true persecution within Sri Lanka simply do not have the means to get out of the country in the first place. In many cases, local government administrative structures prevent truly persecuted minorities from obtaining valid international travel documents; the alternative of using a human smuggler or document vendor is incredibly expensive by Sri Lankan standards, often up to \$40,000 to convey one person to North America. A Sri Lankan who is able to make it to the U.S. or elsewhere to file an asylum claim typically has significant financial and social resources that are simply not consistent with their asylum claim. For example, a large number of successful Sri Lankan gem merchants with extensive U.S. and European travel to participate in international gem exhibitions recently attempted to claim asylum in Canada. In another case, a well-off employee of Sri Lankan Airlines admitted to us that he sent his wife and children to the U.S. to make an asylum claim so that they would have a better standard of living; he continues to work here, making regular trips back and forth for the children's birthdays (although his tourist visa was cancelled following this admission).

¶22. Other gross misstatements range from petitioners claiming to be a members of a persecuted ethnic minority when they are not in fact of that ethnicity, to stories of harassment that contradict known facts. Unfortunately, the stories of prospective asylum claimants seem to be taken at face value when asylum claims are adjudicated in the U.S. Contributing to our doubts about many claims is the fact that successful asylum claimants often later return to Sri Lanka to wed other Sri Lankans or for regular tourist visits, casting serious doubt on any "credible fear" claim. We also often see asylee claimants who have spent many months living in otherwise-safe second countries such as Canada, East Asia or the Middle East before deciding to make their claim in the U.S., where they felt economic opportunities would be greatest.

¶23. Many occasions of aliens of Sri Lankan origin in possession of counterfeit US Legal Permanent Resident Cards (widely known as 'Green Cards') have been reported in the recent past. Some of them have been caught at the airport and have paid as much as \$9000 per card. Two such mala-fide travelers of Sri Lankan origin who tried to fly to the US with fake LPR cards were intercepted and deported from Singapore in 2008.

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Cooperation with Host Government Authorities  
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¶24. Post experiences a very high level of cooperation from many Sri Lankan government agencies. Post receives positive assistance on matters ranging from simple document verification to complex cooperation on fraud cases over long time periods. Good relationships are maintained through regular outreach and meetings with key officials. Additionally, Post's full-time FSN fraud investigator's excellent range of contacts has proven invaluable in

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advancing our goals in fraud management. Cooperation with local law enforcement has proved essential in maintaining Post's successful "zero-tolerance" policy towards false and fraudulent documentation. Nearly all applicants turned over to Sri Lankan authorities are charged and prosecuted under Sri Lankan law. Post regularly works together with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and its Anti-Human Smuggling Investigation Bureau, as well as the Colombo Fraud Investigation Bureau (CFIB). Furthermore, Post cooperates with the Immigration & Emigration Department, State Intelligence Service, the Registrar General's Department, and the Attorney General's Department.

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Arrest Protocol  
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¶25. Post has implemented an arrest program in cooperation with local immigration authorities and police. When Post encounters forged documents in the course of an NIV interview, we contact the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) or the Colombo Fraud Investigations Department (CFIB) of the Sri Lanka Police, and applicants are taken into custody, often on the same day as the visa interview. Most are successfully convicted of felony crimes under Sri Lankan law. This policy, and the arrests it generates, has proven very effective in combating prospective fraudsters. The program was introduced in late 2002, and the number of arrests peaked with 84 in 2004. Since then, the number of arrests has fallen steadily each year, with 37 in 2007 and only 10 in 2008. Other Western missions without similar arrest programs anecdotally report that they see a much higher level of document fraud, demonstrating that this program is a clear deterrent.

¶26. Post's arrest program has led to a number of high level arrests and prosecutions. In early 2008, the discovery of a page substitution intended to hide a previous visa refusal by another diplomatic mission led to the arrest by the CID of an important document forger linked to a terrorism ring of more than fifty Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leaders, cadres and supporters (Reftel). In July 2008, a passport fraudster who attempted to hide a previous deportation from the U.S. was successfully convicted with enhanced punitive jail terms and fines. In late 2008, Post determined that the head of a local NGO for the handicapped was in fact a visa facilitator who had already assisted three individuals in obtaining Canadian visas for \$18,000 each; he was arrested by the CID along with five clients posing as NGO supporters going to the U.S. for training. In February 2009, Post discovered a set of forged Maldivian and Sri Lankan immigration entry / exit stamps on the passport of a Sri Lankan claiming that his fictitious Maldivian employer was sending him for training to the U.S.

¶27. Though Post sees an increasing level of fraud in its IV cases, this typically does not rise to the level of an arrestable offense under Sri Lankan law. Instead, these cases are simply sent back for revocation. In early 2009, a Diversity Visa applicant was arrested with fraudulent documents, Post's first DV arrest in over five years.

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## Applicable Local Laws and Punishments

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¶28. If an applicant submits a forged document as part of their application, they are charged with tendering or forging a fraudulent document under Sections 452-459 of the Sri Lankan Penal Code. The maximum sentence is up to seven years in jail with hard or light labor and a Rs. 5,000 fine (USD \$50 equivalent). Depending on the seriousness of the fraud attempted, someone who submits fake documents can commonly expect a jail term of 6 months to 2 years, suspended for 2-5 years, with a \$25-\$50 fine. Fraud involving passports or visas carries stricter penalties under Section 45 of the Sri Lankan Immigration & Emigration Act of 1948, as amended by Acts in 1998 and 2006. The maximum punishment for passport fraud is five years in jail and a fine of Rs. 500,000 (nearly USD \$5,000). Recent amendments to Sri Lankan law have relaxed the bail provisions. Most offenders can now post bail immediately after appearing before the courts, whereas in the past such offenders were required to spend from a few weeks to several months in remand prison before being allowed to post bail. Local law enforcement authorities report that passport and visa fraud have increased as result, and they expect such trends to further escalate in 2009.

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## Alien Smuggling, Trafficking, Organized Crime, and Terrorist Travel

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¶29. The trend of increased numbers of Sri Lankans and other third-country nationals, such as Indians and Chinese, using fraudulent or altered documents for travel to Europe and North America continues. Sri Lankan nationals mostly target travel documents of third-countries like Malaysia, Singapore, the U.K., Germany and Caribbean countries. The number of Sri Lankan deportees from Malaysia, Japan, Singapore and the UAE has increased significantly and irregular Malaysian travel documents have become the preferred documents of mala fide Sri Lankan passengers, while their hub port has shifted from Bangkok to Kuala Lumpur. Human smugglers charge as much as \$40,000 a person for passage from Sri Lanka to North America.

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## DS Criminal Fraud Investigations

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¶30. Post does not have an ARSO-I. However, consular officers often consult the RSO FSN Investigator during the course of routine investigations on visa cases, a partnership which has proven fruitful in dealing with Sri Lankan law enforcement authorities. During November 2008, the Consular Section worked closely with DS on the investigation of a U.S. passport tampering case with suspected links to U.S. and Canadian companies.

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## Host Country Passport, Identity Documents, and Civil Registry

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¶31. Fraudulent civil documentation is quite common in Sri Lanka and can be easily acquired. For instance, anyone can fraudulently obtain a genuine passport with falsified details by paying about \$250 to a peddler. Other civil documents, identity documents, court documents and counterfeit entry/exit stamps can be easily purchased. A few years ago the country's National Identity issuing department's chief was arrested for selling National Identity Cards to fraudsters, including terrorism suspects. Civil registry functions are inefficient due to a lack of automation; all documents are kept on file in countless stacks of paper that must be hand-checked and are often missing or incomplete. Because document fraud is rampant, document verification is a routine part of all IV, DV and Asylee Follow to Join petition processing. A staff member must physically go to the Registrar's office to check documents, making the verification process extremely time consuming. Other Western missions in Sri Lanka require petitioners in suspect cases to pay a \$500-\$1000 "verification fee," then contract with local



agents to conduct the legwork with the government.

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Areas of Particular Concern  
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¶32. Post experiences positive and consistent collaboration with other Embassies, particularly the Canadian and British High Commissions in Colombo. Canada has the largest Sri Lankan Diaspora population in world, and our close cooperation with the Canadian and British Airline Liaison Officers (ALOs) has proven effective in spotting trends and mala-fide applicants. Further, our three missions have co-hosted airline and airport staff training seminars on our countries' proper travel documents, their basic security features, and applicable visa categories.

¶33. From our close collaboration with the Canadian and British ALOs, Post is aware of major security concerns at Sri Lanka's single international airport, Bandaranaike International Airport, located near the capital, Colombo. The ALOs tell us that, despite extensive and repeated training, check-in staff and immigration authorities regularly accept obvious forgeries and fraudulent documents. Practically no screening is conducted of travelers with non-Sri Lankan passports; instead, airline staff assume that a final decision will be taken by other airline staff in the hub city once the passengers reach their transit point. Passengers who have checked in and gone through immigration regularly disappear once they see that an ALO is on duty at their gate; somehow, they are secreted out through three layers of airport security. Very often these passengers will return to make successful attempts a few days later when no ALO is on duty. Although the airport has multiple closed circuit television (CCTV) systems, the CCTV systems are often turned off or critical segments unavailable (or erased) when requested. A lack of separation between arriving and departing passengers makes boarding card and identity document swaps simple. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that Sri Lankans represent the fourth most frequently offloaded nationality on U.S.-bound flights worldwide, according to 2008 U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) statistics, despite the lack of direct flights from Colombo to the U.S. The ALOs report that Sri Lanka's poor airport controls are well known throughout the region; in addition to Sri

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Lankans, other nationalities such as Indians, Iranians, Pakistanis, Somalis, and Russians have been increasingly taking advantage of Bandaranaike Airport's weaknesses.

¶34. The Consular section has also worked closely with ticketing agents regarding questionable visa cases, even conducting a successful "sting" operation to catch would-be mala fide travelers to the U.S. The trend of unsuspecting applicants falling prey to unscrupulous human smugglers and traffickers who promise visas and jobs overseas in exchange for thousands of dollars prevails in Sri Lanka. Despite several press releases re-iterating the U.S. Embassy's role as the sole visa issuing authority in the country and warning the public of any claims by other parties to facilitate visas, some people continue to pay large sums of money to them and become litigants in lengthy court cases.

¶35. Post has discovered evidence that relatively large numbers of Sri Lankans are entering the United States without inspection across the U.S.-Mexico border. This information has come to light from both IDENT hits showing arrests at the border and from information provided by the Canadian High Commission in Colombo about Sri Lankans making asylum claims at the U.S.-Canada border. One NIV applicant whose IDENT results showed had been apprehended in Brownsville, Texas in 2006 told us that connections between Sri Lankan smugglers and Mexican coyotes are well established. In June 2008, the Canadian mission provided a list of more than 100 Sri Lankans who claimed asylum at the U.S.-Canada border who had no records in CCD, and we strongly suspect that all of them entered the U.S. without inspection from Mexico. Post expects this trend to accelerate as several South American countries have dropped visa requirements for Sri Lankans in recent years, making it even easier to reach Latin America and enter the smuggling pipeline.

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Staffing and Training  
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136. Colombo's Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) consists of one part-time officer Fraud Prevention Manager (FPM), and one full-time Fraud Prevention Foreign Service National (FSN) investigator. Both of the other officers have also completed fraud training at FSI. A second FSN, the NIV supervisor, has completed fraud training but has no specific FPU role.

Titles and training history are as follows:

Christopher R. Green (departs 5/09; to be replaced by William Dowers, 8/09)  
Consul  
PC-541 Fraud Prevention for Consular Managers, Washington, 5/08

Emily Hicks  
Vice Consul and Fraud Prevention Manager (part-time)  
PC-541 Fraud Prevention for Consular Managers, Washington, 12/08

Joel T. Wiegert  
Vice Consul  
PC-541 Fraud Prevention for Consular Managers, Washington, 8/08

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PC-126 Advanced Consular Name Checking, Washington, 8/08

Sanjeeva Gammanpila  
FPU FSN Investigator (full-time)  
PC-542 FSN Fraud Prevention Training, Washington, 4/02  
DHS Document Fraud Detection and Recognition, Colombo, 2002

Anusha Fernandez  
FSN NIV Supervisor  
PC-542 FSN Fraud Prevention Training, Washington, 11/05

BLAKE